


National Intelligence Council

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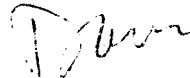
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Thank you for your article entitled
"East Asia and the Great Power Coalition."

Attached is an unclassified paper I
recently wrote which briefly addresses
Soviet policy in Asia. As I mentioned
when you were here, I read parts of the
unpublished manuscript of the Council on
Foreign Relations book on the same subject
and found it very useful.

I used this paper at the COM Conference
in Honolulu in late April.

Best regards,



Dave Gries

Soviet Policy in East Asia

Soviet policy towards the countries of East Asia has acquired a military coloration in the 1980s, confronting the US with a new challenge to the traditional American role in the region. The deployment of the Soviet Pacific Fleet has had far-reaching consequences that alter in fundamental ways the balance of power between the US and the Soviet Union. But despite these clear Soviet gains, Moscow has inadvertently helped the US to reestablish balanced relationships that were weakened by Vietnam and further strained by disengagement plans proposed in the latter half of the 1970s, as most Asian nations have reacted to the Soviet military threat by strengthening political and economic ties not only with the US but with each other. As a result, the US has achieved a balance among the political, economic, and military components of its East Asian policy and is positioned to maintain this balance in the decade of the 80s.

Among the four fleets in the Soviet navy, the Soviet Pacific Fleet is the largest and farthest ranging. It outnumbers the US Seventh Fleet in ships and submarines, but it lacks the war fighting potential provided by the Seventh Fleet's aircraft carriers and thus falls somewhat short of US capabilities. The gap, however, is closing. Because the Soviet Pacific Fleet is far larger and better equipped than is required for defense of the Soviet homeland, its growth must be understood as an aspect of Soviet global strategy to match or exceed US military power wherever it is encountered. This connection is further underscored by a growth rate comparable to Soviet military growth rates observed elsewhere in the world.